

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Private School**

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice  
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Mrs. Joann Rhoten

Official School Name: St. Columban School

School Mailing Address: 896 Oakland Rd  
Loveland, OH 45140-8484

County: Clermont State School Code Number: 54965

Telephone: (513) 683-7903 E-mail: jrhoten@saintcolumbanschool.org

Fax: (513) 683-7904 Web URL: www.saintcolumbanschool.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Jim Rigg Superintendent e-mail: cso@CatholicCincinnati.org

District Name: Archdiocese of Cincinnati District Phone: (513) 421-3131

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Frank Haas

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

---

11PV73

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

11PV73

All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	43	44	87
K	15	15	30		7	37	49	86
1	43	29	72		8	43	35	78
2	40	49	89		9	0	0	0
3	40	39	79		10	0	0	0
4	38	46	84		11	0	0	0
5	42	45	87		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								692

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
0 % Black or African American  
4 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
93 % White  
2 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 2%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <b>to</b> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	5
(2)	Number of students who transferred <b>from</b> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	12
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	699
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 0%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 0

Number of languages represented, not including English: 0

Specify languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 31

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 2%  
 Total number of students served: 14

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>24</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>34</u>	<u>25</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 28:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	98%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	4%	0%	4%	8%	8%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:

\_\_\_\_\_

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in a community college

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in vocational training

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Found employment

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Military service

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Other

\_\_\_\_\_ %

**Total**

\_\_\_\_\_ **0%**

The St. Columban story begins at the front door with a mural of Jesus, the Teacher, surrounded by children in school uniform. Jesus and His teachings have always been at the heart of a St. Columban education. In 1926, St. Columban opened its doors in the then-rural community of Loveland, Ohio. In its inaugural year, three Sisters of Notre Dame educated 70 students in grades 1-8. Today, Loveland is a vibrant and growing suburban community, and St. Columban School thrives on the foundation laid by the Sisters of Notre Dame. With a current enrollment of 692 students in grades kindergarten through 8, the school serves predominately middle-class professional families who value a challenging and well-rounded Catholic education.

As the largest ministry of St. Columban Church, the school's mission and belief statements flow from the larger parish mission to worship, serve, and educate. The mission statement reads:

"St. Columban School, in partnership with the Catholic faith community of St. Columban Parish, strives to share the love of God by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through an enriching and challenging learning environment, we nurture students so that they will become creative problem solvers and compassionate, confident life-long learners, who will make a difference by serving others."

A dedicated and experienced staff of teachers and administrators develop and implement academic plans that align with this mission as well as overall strategic plans to keep the school responsive to the needs of the ever-changing world. Twin accreditation goals – developing character based on Catholic values and increasing student use of critical thinking skills - blend learning that is vital for students to become servant leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Separate strategic plans guide new programming, technological upgrades, and facility modernization.

The spirit and mission of St. Columban permeate the ordinary and extraordinary moments of the school year. A snapshot of an average day shows students engaging in lessons which develop critical thinking skills via high level questioning and discovery learning. Students write, create multi-media presentations, and give oral presentations putting the strategies for effective communication into action. During free times and lunch hours, students participate in leadership and service projects. They sell t-shirts and bracelets to raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness, reach out to the poor with food items at Thanksgiving and gifts at Christmas, and support their sister school in Uganda through a Mission Drive during Lent. Student Council leaders plan special events, like volleyball and basketball tournaments and a Veteran's Day ceremony. Parent volunteers are a strong daily presence in the building, partnering with teachers and administration to read to classes, work in the classrooms on enrichment activities, clean the cafeteria, and assist in the library. At the end of the school day, St. Columban students participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities, including Scouts, Lego Robotics, Drama Club, Bell Choir and Stock Market Club as well as numerous sports.

St. Columban traditions create the extraordinary moments of the school year that bind the student body. The overhead roar of vintage planes at this year's annual Veterans' Day ceremony hushed the crowd into a shared moment of appreciation for our veterans. Each year, the eighth graders share a similar moment of awe and respect as they watch their Student Council leaders lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers on the class trip to Washington, D.C. The spontaneous hug from a first grader to his adopted eighth grade buddy and other spirit-filled moments enrich the educational experience.

Through the ordinary and extraordinary moments of each school day, students are held to high standards of academic excellence. Academically, St. Columban students score higher than the national average, but more significantly, higher than anticipated. Combining a strong core curriculum with fine arts programs, a health and wellness initiative, technology skills, and visits from foreign student delegations, St. Columban weaves together a well-rounded education.

Each spring, St. Columban graduates approximately eighty-five young people who have internalized and live the mission of the school. These students go forth to attend approximately ten different high schools in the community. Feedback from those schools is overwhelmingly positive, indicating that students from St. Columban maintain a distinct attitude and demeanor which exemplifies the well-rounded, future-ready learner. The programs, curriculum, dedication of the faculty and staff, parental support, and traditions of St. Columban School enable the alumnae to become leaders who are involved in their parish community and the world around them. Based on a long history of achievement, St. Columban School is proud to continue to foster the growth of new generations into a world that critically needs strong, moral, and compassionate leaders.



### 1. Assessment Results:

During the years 2005-2009 St. Columban students in grades 2, 4, 6, & 8 took the Terra Nova and InView tests each October. The tests assessed school strengths and weaknesses as well as individual students' progress according to their ability.\* The Terra Nova scores listed in the data table clearly indicate at first glance that St. Columban students consistently achieve at high academic levels. The national percentiles of the Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores range from a low of 76 to a high of 91, placing every grade in math and reading above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for schools. Further analysis of the scores indicates even more clearly the strength of the St. Columban academic curriculum and instruction.

Students in the eighth grade class of 2009-2010 (the highest grade level for St. Columban School) achieved a national percentile of mean NCE score of 87 in math. Tracking their progress over the past five years, a reader will note that this same group of children scored a percentile of mean NCE score of 76 when in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (2005-2006) and an 83 when in 6<sup>th</sup> grade (2007-08) indicating that student achievement relative to national norms increases as students advance through the grade levels at St. Columban. A similar performance trend can be found in language where the percentile of mean NCE scores progressed from 81 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, to 86 in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 91 in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Reading scores showed some variability but an overall upward trend with percentile of mean NCE scores of 85 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 81 in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 89 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The high Terra Nova test scores become more relevant and impressive when studied in tandem with the InView test scores, which measure students' cognitive ability. The InView test helps to establish anticipated scores. When the achievement score is compared to the anticipated score, educators can assess student progress in relation to ability. In group scores, a difference of seven points between anticipated and achieved scores is considered to be "educationally meaningful" or significant. An analysis of the 2009-10 standardized test scores for grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 showed positive differences in math, language, and reading for every grade level, with educationally meaningful differences (greater than 7 points) in reading for grades 2, 4, and 6, in math for grade 2, and in language for grade 8. Students also achieved educationally meaningful positive differences in social studies for every tested grade level and in science for grades 4, 6 & 8. Furthermore, seventy-eight percent of the tested students achieved a "total score" placing them in the top 25% in the nation while only 40.5% were shown to have a cognitive ability of 116+.

Test scores of subgroups based on race/ethnicity or low income were not disaggregated for this analysis because there is no subgroup of racial minorities or students from low income families that exceeds 10 in number. It should also be noted that scores of students with identified disabilities, as defined by IDEIA, are not included in the group scores listed above because of accommodations made for the testing situation. However, scores were analyzed for subgroups according to cognitive ability levels. The assessment summary provided by CTB McGraw Hill for the October, 2009 test date shows that students with a cognitive level of 116+ averaged a difference between achieved and anticipated scale scores of +11.1, +14.2 for students between 85 and 115, and +22.0 for students with an ability level of 84 or below. The data indicates that students of all levels are performing above expectations, with a noteworthy difference for the students with below average ability. The reading difference is greater than the difference in mathematics.

A study of the Performance on Objectives reports indicate that St. Columban students are well above the moderate mastery range in the majority of objectives. There are only a few objectives where students performed in the moderate mastery range and those are in the area of mathematics. The school leadership is developing and implementing targeted improvement plans for these areas.

\* In 2010, St. Columban switched to ITBS testing, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

In the past five years, St. Columban teachers have significantly increased the data they collect to drive instruction. Currently, their assessment instruments include nationally-normed standardized tests, district-wide writing samples, critical thinking writing samples, and classroom assessments.

As the school year begins, St. Columban teachers collect diagnostic data in reading and math. Instruments like DIBELS Next and fluency probes assess a student's reading fluency, while the DAZE, MAZE, and classroom diagnostic tests assess reading comprehension skills. Star Reader determines a child's reading level. First grade students are screened in math. The collected data is used to rank and identify students who will receive math and reading services. The number of students in a served group varies based on the intensity of needs. Progress toward benchmarks is systematically monitored and communicated to parents via conferences and progress reports.

St. Columban also assesses students using two types of writing samples. The first is an Archdiocesan-wide writing sample to assess the content and mechanics of students' writing in grades 3, 5 and 7. Papers are scored by outside teachers to provide an impartial assessment of student writing skills relative to other students in the Archdiocese. The second type of writing sample, unique to St. Columban, is used to indicate a student's ability to use and express critical thinking. Writing prompts and accompanying rubrics selected by St. Columban faculty assess students' use of critical thinking skills in math and English (all students) as well as science and social studies (junior high students). Pretests are given each year in September and posttests are given in the spring. To insure and monitor progress, each grade targets a critical thinking strategy, uses it in a variety of lessons and tracks the percentage of students who achieve distinguished, satisfactory, developing, or emerging marks.

In addition, St. Columban uses cognitive ability and achievement tests in grades 2, 4, 6, and 8. Terra Nova tests (used until 2009) and Iowa tests (begun in 2010) are nationally-normed and indicate areas where there are educationally meaningful differences between anticipated and actual scores (7+ points). The group reports paint a picture of school-wide strengths or relative weaknesses, which are used to set curriculum goals and staff professional development. Individual reports are used to spot children who are working above or below ability.

Each element is an important component in identifying needs and helping St. Columban students to achieve academic success.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

St. Columban School uses many avenues of communication to engage all stakeholders in tracking academic progress. With frequent and open communication, parents and staff are able to work together to help each student achieve his/her best success.

Edline is a primary means of communication. Through this password-protected site, all parents and students have access to classroom curriculum and newsletters, while fourth to eighth grade students also have access to their current grades on tests, homework, and projects. Targeted objectives in math are listed on this site. Interim reports are available on Edline for grades 4-8, while hard-copy reports are sent home for students in grades K-3. At the end of the trimester, report cards are issued for every child. Math skill checklists accompany the report cards to indicate level of mastery for the targeted math objectives.

Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to promote conversations regarding student progress. In upper grade levels, students lead the conference using work samples. Student reflection on their progress empowers them to set appropriate goals for the upcoming trimester. Parents are free to contact the teachers via e-mail or the school office regarding any concerns they have about their child's progress at any time.

Standardized Terra Nova and InView testing results are sent home to inform parents of student achievement relative to ability. Individual student reports as well as teacher communication help parents to understand the data. Group scores are reported annually to the faculty, pastor, and the Education Commission with an analysis of school strengths and relative weaknesses.

The school also communicates results of universal screenings, such as DIBELS and reading comprehension measures, to inform parents if their children are meeting benchmarks. Accelerated and Star Reader tests are communicated through the Home Connect online. Up-to-date information allows the school to tap the power of parental involvement.

Since St. Columban is a non-public school, it does not have state report cards to share with the community. Additionally, the Archdiocese discourages comparison of scores across diocesan schools due to different student populations, so St. Columban does not publish scores outside of the parish community. The Education Commission, comprised of parents, is advised of all scores and the school provides brochures to incoming families to give an overview of the school's excellent achievements. The parish has a public relations employee who also communicates to the community the strengths of the school.

#### **4. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

St. Columban School proudly communicates its successes throughout the community. This year, it focused on sharing the implementation of a critical thinking strategies program, which was developed in response to data on our highest achieving students and as a means to prepare all students for the 21st century workplace.

In the quest to share information with other professionals and area schools, Principal Mrs. Jo Rhoten spoke at an Archdiocesan Principal's Meeting in 2010. She instructed the administrators on the importance of critical thinking and discussed the use of Bill Daggett's Rigor and Relevance Framework as a means to accomplish this goal. She presented more specific information in smaller group sessions and monthly meetings with area principals. Mrs. Rhoten has trained her peers on the details of St. Columban's framework and shared materials with other principals to assist with implementing a critical thinking program in their schools. A portfolio of the critical thinking strategies successfully implemented by St. Columban teachers was assembled. This Strategy Binder has been shared at meetings, showing how different approaches can be used at each grade level and how they can be implemented across the curriculum.

Handouts, brochures, and a Power Point presentation of the critical thinking methodology have been created for parents and shared at an Open House evening and an Education Commission meeting. Two articles were written and submitted to *Today's Catholic Teacher* in the fall of 2010 sharing some of these innovations. To reach the wider community, school advocates have written feature pieces for local news outlets. St. Columban is committed to sharing its vision because the faculty and administration believes they are preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist in a world that has yet to be imagined.

## 1. Curriculum:

The core curriculum of St. Columban School is based upon the Graded Course of Study prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with added emphasis on critical thinking skills and communication. To challenge the high achieving student population, St. Columban teachers remodel lessons and assessments to include questions and activities that include application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. Teachers integrate strategies into the core curriculum to help students compare and contrast, "show, not tell," make inferences, draw conclusions, and evaluate sources. With each strategy, students are required to reflect upon and communicate their thinking through constructed responses to writing prompts.

Foundational skills to develop oral and written communication are presented in St. Columban's language arts curriculum. The school offers specific instruction in reading, writing, grammar, and spelling with a minimum of ninety minutes of instruction per day, even at the junior high level. Technology is used to enhance the curriculum with students using Accelerated Reader for leveled books and quizzes, Microsoft Word and Power Point for presentations and Criterion Writing for immediate feedback on writing pieces. Opportunities to apply and enrich student learning are available through book clubs and student newspapers organized by the part-time enrichment teacher.

Problem solving and communication are cornerstones of the math curriculum. Students actively explore and construct mathematical concepts creating and discovering connections and applications of models. A new emphasis on math vocabulary assists students in writing about their mathematical reasoning. Students have the opportunity to advance in their study of mathematics in their junior high years, taking Pre-Algebra in grade 7 and Algebra in grade 8, if they qualify.

Through the social studies curriculum, students discover the people, culture, and geography of their home communities and of the world at large. Classroom experiences like History Alive; school-wide experiences like hosting student delegations from China and Mexico; and travel experiences like the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C. help the students to step beyond their own place and time and to become increasingly interested in understanding the global community.

The primary goal of the science program is to develop the skills necessary to understand the world through the process of scientific inquiry. Concepts in life, physical, earth, and space science are taught experientially, allowing students to make discoveries and master the scientific method through application and practice. Participation in the state science fair provides junior high students the additional opportunity to explore a self-selected topic under the guidance of a professional in the field of science.

Health programs are taught through science class with an emphasis on personal health and safety. The Health & Wellness Initiative, one element of the most recent strategic plan, inspired a nutritionally-improved lunch program and the addition of a new playground. Physical education classes enhance the health of the students by providing a variety of fitness, individual, and team activities. All students are required to participate in physical education classes each year. Students in grades 4-8 participate in the Presidential Physical Fitness program annually.

Students in grades kindergarten through six receive instruction in Spanish once a week. Classes introduce cultural diversity and allow students to develop a basic knowledge of common words and short phrases. Spanish instruction is optional for students in grades 7 & 8 as a daily 45 minute class for one or two trimesters. In the 2009-10 school year, 62% of junior high students studied Spanish. ***St. Columban School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirement.***

Art and music classes are provided daily for one trimester for students in grades 6, 7 & 8 and once a week throughout the year for students in grades 1-5. Students learn to express themselves in art class using a variety of media and materials including paper, watercolors, oils, fabric, ink, and metal. Art projects are often tied across the curriculum, especially to historical and cultural studies. In music class students actively make music using their voices, instruments, and movement. A collection of Orff instruments as well as five keyboards complement the hands-on experience. Students in junior high may elect to take

performance and music lab classes. A Fine Arts Committee, formed by parents to increase student exposure to the visual and performing arts, assists the faculty in organizing a Fine Arts Showcase of art displays and musical performances. Students also perform in Christmas plays and on Grandparents' Day.

The final piece is the umbrella under which all instruction and learning take place. The basic doctrines of Catholicism and Gospel values lie at the heart of a St. Columban education. Through religion classes, prayer experiences, and service projects, students grow in character and nurture their moral development as they learn to view the world through Catholic-Christian teachings. In so doing, they develop an appreciation of the magnificence of God's creation and the beauty of the arts. They also learn to use the Catholic emphasis on peace and social justice as a lens through which to view issues facing the modern world.

## **2. Reading/English:**

St. Columban's K-3 language arts curriculum is a comprehensive "learning to read and write" program, encompassing phonemic awareness, phonics, the writing process, spelling, grammar, reading fluency and comprehension skills. Skill development in encoding and decoding is accompanied by exposure to rich literature and discussions, building a firm foundation for reading comprehension. The *Reading Street* anthology provides sequential development and practice of fluency and comprehension skills through a variety of literature genres and leveled readers.

Learning is managed and organized through small reading groups and/or the Daily Five program. The Daily Five is a curriculum framework in which students exercise responsibility and independence as they choose when to read to self, read to another, listen to tapes, write, and do word work (vocabulary) throughout the week. With teacher assistance and Star Reader, students learn to choose "just right" books. Spelling, grammar, and writing rules are made relevant to students as they write across the curriculum.

The reading curriculum for upper grades focuses on "reading to learn". In addition to diverse anthology selections, novel studies presented through whole class instruction and literature circles hone reading skills such as inferring, predicting, summarizing, and evaluating, while exposing students to different cultures and time periods. Reading contracts are sometimes used to help meet personal learning styles.

Students create writing pieces of every type using the writing process. Exemplars and scoring rubrics are shared to improve final products. Students draw upon writing skills to express their thinking and reasoning, especially on critical thinking prompts. Grades six through eight use Criterion Writing, an online writing program which analyzes student writing as they work and provides immediate feedback.

St. Columban students have a wide-range of reading abilities, but each student finds challenge through a combination of leveled readers, the Accelerated Reader program, and tracking which provides for advanced reading classes in junior high. A well-stocked library of nearly 10,000 books, weekly library classes and two annual book fairs offer students additional options for reading pleasure. Right to Read Week celebrations and motivation programs like "Blazing the Trail to Literacy" sponsored by the local fire department highlight the importance of reading.

Students, who have not reached reading benchmarks as determined by DIBELS, diagnostic tests, and teacher checklists, receive support services from the Title I reading teacher, reading specialist, and/or teacher aides. Instructional approaches include Orton-Gillingham lessons, Sound Partners, repeated readings, and direct instruction on reading constructs.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Mathematics involves concepts and skills, but more importantly, their application for problem solving and critical thinking. Therefore, the primary goal of the mathematics curriculum at St. Columban is to help students learn to confidently use math in everyday living and to solve problems with a mathematical approach. Students explore and construct mathematical concepts through classroom activities and manipulative materials, leading them from concrete to abstract principles. At the same time, students develop the ability to communicate and reason mathematically, focusing on the acquisition of critical thinking strategies and math vocabulary.

To make the rigor of mathematics obtainable, teachers design instruction to make skills and concepts relevant to everyday living situations. Students in the sixth grade operate Coffee Brake, a wholly-owned and operated non-profit student operation, delivering coffee to parents as they drop off their children on Friday mornings, thereby learning and employing math, language, and business skills in an authentic situation.

To refine and reinforce conceptual understandings, students use written and oral language as a means of explaining and reporting mathematical thinking. Critical thinking strategies are taught and progress is assessed through the use of writing prompts and rubrics. As an example, students are taught a mathematical model for investigating math questions using hypotheses, data collection, analysis, and concluding statements. Annual longitudinal growth is measured through the fall and spring prompts.

Acquisition and retention of foundational skills is critical for continuing development in mathematics. St. Columban School uses a two-pronged approach to improve the mathematics skills of students who are performing below grade level. First, data is collected for foundational concepts, computational skills, problem solving ability, and use of math vocabulary to identify the specific weaknesses of students. Progress is communicated to parents via a math skills checklist that accompanies each trimester report card. In this way, St. Columban uses one of its true strengths, parent interest and involvement, and is able to direct parents in the best way to assist their child(ren). Secondly, St. Columban employs support personnel to provide small group instruction for struggling students. A math program teacher works three days per week with students in a pull-out program, using diagnostic data to address specific skill areas. Additionally, aides assist teachers in the classroom one day per week in grades 3 through 5 to reduce teacher/student ratio for normal instruction and to provide tier 2 intervention when necessary.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

St. Columban School's tradition of excellence in science inquiry was affirmed in May, 2009 when the school was named one of eight middle and high schools to receive the distinguished Harold C. Shaw Outstanding School Award out of approximately 290 schools that were represented at the Ohio State Science Fair. The tradition continues as junior high students participate in science fairs at the school, local, and state levels, each year garnering cash and scholarship awards based on student achievement. In 2009, St. Columban had 17 students who qualified for the State Science Fair, the most from any school in Southwest Ohio. In 2010, the school and the junior high science teacher both received Governor Awards for Excellence in Youth Opportunities in Science.

The achievements of the junior high students are built upon a strong science curriculum taught through the elementary years. Through classroom lessons and hands-on activities, students explore basic scientific knowledge and principles. Video streams are incorporated into SmartBoard lessons allowing students to visualize the scientific concepts presented in textbooks. Students use the scientific method to answer questions about the world around them and learn how to evaluate information found through internet research. They are taught strategies to communicate their science learning.

As one example of cross-curricular connections, first grade uses fiction literature to introduce science concepts and create interest. Using a new model called the science writing heuristic method, students generate their own questions and use a variety of materials to find answers. As they write claims and their reasoning, the teacher helps them find evidence to prove their theories. The school has hosted a school-wide Math and Science Night and a first-grade Family Science Night, at which students and parents explore science concepts through fun activities.

Field trips complement classroom studies. The second grade travels to the Cincinnati Nature Center each year to learn about local wildlife and habitat. The third and sixth grades hunt for fossils locally and at Caesar Creek State Park to study animals and plant histories. First and fourth grade students visit the Cincinnati Zoo.

St. Columban science classes help students grow in their appreciation of the world around them. Seventh grade students run a school recycling program and first grade students go on a service learning trip to pick up litter. Such service-oriented projects help students understand the impact they have on the community and practice being grateful stewards of creation.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

St. Columban School strives to meet the needs of every student through a three-tiered instructional delivery model and multiple support staff. The three-tiered approach is referred to as response to intervention or RTI. Through RTI, core instruction (Tier I) is monitored in order to test its effectiveness for all students. Effectiveness is defined as 80% or more of students achieving academic proficiency on core standards. A review of the Terra Nova Performance on Objectives reports shows that student groups achieve in the moderate to high mastery range on every objective. This result suggests that St. Columban's core instruction is effective for the majority of students.

There are, however, students who are not meeting grade level targets. These students are identified through universal reading and math screenings as well as classroom performance. Based on these indicators, St. Columban teachers form instructional groups at Tier II. The assistance of teacher aides and parent volunteers allows teachers to flexibly group students, so that some students receive intervention assistance while other students are stretched with enrichment activities. Instructional delivery methods such as the Daily 5, where students work individually or in pairs after mini-lessons, also allow Tier II intervention for struggling students. In junior high, reading fluency is currently the target for Tier II intervention. Identified students chart their baseline and reading fluency goals, providing both data to teachers and the opportunity for the students to be engaged in their own learning process.

Tier III is the most intensive level of support, requiring the most differentiation of instruction. Support at Tier III is provided by reading and math specialists in formats that vary by grade levels. In the primary grades, for example, students who need Tier III reading support receive instruction from a specialist two days per week and follow-up support from a teacher aide on two additional days. In grade five, where the focus is reading in the content area, a specialist provides direct instruction on intensive reading constructs in small groups two days per week and supports the teacher in using the same reading skill in the regular social studies class one additional day.

In some cases, intervention students also need curricular accommodations and modifications. These students receive individualized plans, which may include support from service providers. When necessary, assistive technology like Kurzweil, Franklin Spellers and audio CDs is provided.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Professional development for St. Columban staff is driven by the current school improvement plan. Written as part of the accreditation process, the improvement plan lists student goals and objectives for a 4-year cycle. Professional development topics are selected to directly align with the student goals and the administration team finds the appropriate programs or service personnel for in-service presentations.

The current accreditation goals are to develop character through the study and practice of Catholic value traits and to increase student use of critical thinking skills. Each topic has been addressed annually through school-wide in-services. Additionally, teachers have attended self-selected workshops and classes and formed professional reading groups to build their capacity to achieve the accreditation goals in their classrooms.

The Catholic identity goal has focused on three distinct Catholic value traits each year – one per trimester. To prepare the teachers to incorporate these value traits into their classrooms, members of the parish staff have presented back-to-school workshops targeting the three value traits for the year. Topics have included evangelization, stewardship, and social justice.

To achieve the academic goal, administrators searched for a systemic way to teach students to use critical thinking skills. At the Model Schools Conference conducted by the International Center for Leadership Education (ICLE), they found the Rigor and Relevance Framework, which has formed the centerpiece of a series of in-services. In year one, the administrators presented an in-service focused on research showing the importance of critical thinking for brain health, the definition of critical thinking, the Rigor and Relevance framework, and samples of remodeled lessons to achieve instruction in the highest quadrants. During the second year, the in-service focused on strategies to teach “power words” on Bloom’s taxonomy and teacher observations were directly tied to the use of the strategies. A binder of the strategies and accompanying lessons was compiled. Year three, the current stage of the plan, focuses on

identifying levels of questions on the knowledge taxonomy and improving key questions that can elevate lessons to more rigorous levels. Observations are again tied directly to the in-service.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has allowed St. Columban to contract for in-services on other topics of importance. Last year, math teachers were involved in a series of curriculum mapping in-services to create vertical alignment in the math curriculum. This year, a series of in-services are being presented to develop and support Tier II intervention in the classrooms.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The lively discussions of the pastor, principal, assistant principal, and business manager at weekly Tuesday morning meetings characterize the leadership style and philosophy of St. Columban School. Open and inclusive, with students at the heart of all decisions, the St. Columban leadership team directs its energy to carrying out the mission and vision of the school. Utilizing their individual strengths, the members form a strong administrative team. Similar synergistic collaborations with teachers, parents, and Education Commission members form a strong platform for progress.

The principal sets the tone in creating an environment that reflects a Catholic Christian community of faith. She begins each school day with Gospel readings, announcements of birthdays and special events, and “thoughts for the day” from Project Wisdom. She protects the dignity of each child and fiercely addresses suspected bullying. In working with children, she ends each encounter with, “We can do this!”

Educational leadership is the responsibility of the principal and assistant principal. As instructional leaders of the school, they guide the development of school improvement plans and yearly academic goals. Responsibility and ownership for attaining the goals is shared with faculty members, each of whom is assigned to an A.I.M. team (accreditation implementation) in the area of religion, math, English, science, or social studies. This structure enables the faculty to collaborate horizontally and vertically across the grade levels, coordinate resources, and develop relationships among themselves as they progress toward the collective goal of improved student achievement.

The shared leadership style is also employed in creating a positive, collaborative school environment. The faculty is divided into teams with various areas of administrative and/or general welfare responsibilities. For example, the Discipline Team reviews policies and suggests revisions for the Parent/Student Handbook; the Programs Team organizes school-wide events such as Grandparents’ Day and Catholic Schools Week activities; and the Spirit Team strengthens faculty bonds through baby and bridal showers and mid-winter chili contests. Students are also involved in shared leadership through the Student Council.

The principal and assistant principal work closely as a team to support stakeholders as they work on behalf of the school. With an open door policy, they facilitate communication among the stakeholders and balance the demands of students, teachers, and parents.



## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

11PV73

1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2009-2010 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$2300</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$3200</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$3561

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$393

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?  
11%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 98%

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 2

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed -  
2007

Publisher: CTB McGraw  
Hill

Scores reported as:  
Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	84	81	82	86	91
Number of students tested	76	85	90	91	84
Percent of total students tested	97	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0	0	0	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 2

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed-2000/3rd Ed-2007

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	86	84	81	82	85
Number of students tested	76	85	90	91	84
Percent of total students tested	97	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0	0	0	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	76	76	83	83	76
Number of students tested	84	89	84	77	75
Percent of total students tested	94	99	97	94	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	1	3	5	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6	1	3	6	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	86	77	89	87	85
Number of students tested	84	89	84	77	75
Percent of total students tested	94	99	97	94	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	1	3	5	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6	1	3	6	4
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007  
Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as:  
Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	83	80	83	78	79
Number of students tested	81	81	72	77	88
Percent of total students tested	95	93	97	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	2	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	7	3	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	91	87	81	80	77
Number of students tested	81	81	72	77	88
Percent of total students tested	95	93	97	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	2	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	7	3	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007  
Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

Scores reported as:  
Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	87	75	85	82	83
Number of students tested	60	72	82	84	81
Percent of total students tested	90	97	99	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	2	1	3	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	10	3	1	3	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73



## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 2nd Ed -2000/3rd Ed - 2007  
Publisher: CBT McGraw Hill

Scores reported as:  
Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	89	85	86	87	86
Number of students tested	60	72	82	84	81
Percent of total students tested	90	97	99	97	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	2	1	3	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	10	3	1	3	2
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> St. Columban School switched from the 2nd edition (normed in 2000) to the 3rd edition (normed in 2007) of the Terra Nova Test in October, 2008, as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.					

11PV73